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ABSTRACT

This two-part paper describes the working assumptions approach to early program evaluation and illustrates the approach with a study of a new social science curriculum in American ethnic pluralism for community colleges. Part I begins by providing a rationale for early program evaluation and describing the working assumptions approach as a model which identifies the teacher and student behaviors and activities which are critical to program success. This section also describes and illustrates the development of the working assumptions model; considers the ethnographic data-gathering methods used; and discusses the uses of evaluation results. Part II reviews the use of this approach to field test prototype units of a new social science curriculum. This section describes: (1) the two ethnic pluralism units that were field tested and the materials they used; (2) the objectives of the field test; (3) the working assumptions model, which included one objective for faculty, seven objectives for students, and four general course goals; (4) the selection of five community colleges as test sites; (5) the data-gathering methods used, including a teacher log, teacher interviews, a student questionnaire, and classroom observations/field visits; (6) methods used to analyze data and validate findings; and (7) findings and implications for further development and evaluation related to three of the eight working assumptions develcped in the model. (AYC)

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A "WORKING ASSUMPTIONS" APPROACH TO EARLY PROGRAM EVALUATION

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Despite strong current interest in evaluation which assists early program development and revision, the purpose and methods of "formative evaluation" have not been well articulated by the evaluation profession. The problems of formative evaluation reflect a schism in the evaluation field between traditional empiricists who argue for more controlled, experimental design, and more rigorous training of evaluators in multivariate analysis, and phenomenologically oriented ethnographers who argue for a more valid and "inside view" of program processes (Weiss, 1972a; Anthrop and Ed Quarterly, 1977). The press for controlled experiment is often premature, resulting in studies of program outcomes before implementation problems have been identified (Fullen and Pomfret, 1977). Ethnographic and "responsive" evaluation (Stake, 1972; Kemmis, 1974) frequently reflects the personal art of the ethnographer more than a set of explicit and replicable techniques.

This paper describes one approach to early program evaluation and illustrates the approach with a study of new social science curriculum in American ethnic pluralism for community colleges. The approach represents a continuation and elaboration of a "Developmental model of program evaluation" outlined in a recent article by the author (Morocco, 1979). That model presents a view of innovation as a three-stage cycle of design/planning, implementation, and adoption, each stage having a complementary evaluation purpose and method. Early program evaluation, implementation research, and "summative" evaluation are each tied to the changing needs of developers

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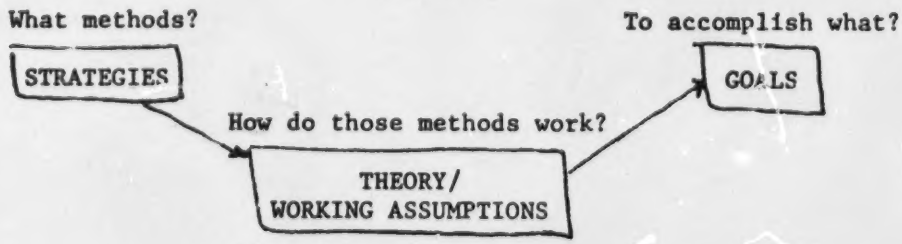
and users and are continuous and interrelated research processes. The approach described in the paper is appropriate to the design/planning stage, the purpose of which is to assist development and revision of early program components while also laying the groundwork for implementation and outcome evaluation. Organized in two sections, the paper discusses the "Working Assumptions Approach" and illustrates it with a summary of the field test of a new social science curriculum.

THE WORKING ASSUMPTIONS APPROACH

Rationale

Once a program is fully developed and implemented, we can investigate whether or not it achieves its intended goals. During early program stages, however, an evaluation more appropriately asks the intermediate question of whether basic program strategies actually set in motion processes assumed necessary to program success. To pursue that question, evaluators need a model describing what developers want to accomplish (goals), and how they expect materials to accomplish those goals (theory or working assumptions) (Weiss, 1972b).

Figure 1.



A Working Assumptions Model should embody the developers' major assumptions regarding use of materials as simply as possible. The Model is not a list of instructor activities, which constitute "implementation" of the program

(Ashley and Butts, 1970; Crowther, 1972; and Downey et al., 1975, are representative of that approach), but rather a model of instructor and student behaviors and activities which constitute the implicit teaching-learning process of the program. Working assumptions are likely to be tied to the particular content and approach of a program rather than describing global or generic learning processes.

In designing a field study around such a model, researchers must maintain a balance between focusing on processes specified in the model and learning from unanticipated events. This call for balance implies a view of curriculum innovation as a complex and somewhat unpredictable process of "mutual adaptation" between instructor goals and students interests and needs on the one hand, and curriculum materials, on the other (Fullen and Pomfret, 1977). If some assumed processes are not occurring, only a balanced range of data can help researchers and developers identify the reason for the failure. On the one hand, program strategies may not set the desired processes in motion and therefore may not be an appropriate route to program goals. On the other hand, program theory may not adequately identify how the strategies do in fact work. They may lead toward program goals but by some other means than developers had conceptualized. Thus, while organizing data gathering around the model, evaluators must also provide field testers continuous opportunities to teach the developers how materials actually work without prejudging what user experiences will be.

Developing the Model

A Working Assumptions Model may be most productively developed through combined efforts of curriculum developers and evaluation staff. Although

writing deadlines and shifting program goals and assumptions can limit developers' ability to formulate the model, evaluators should resist invitations to define critical program processes for developers. The steps outlined in Figure 2 suggest one way to work collaboratively on a model.

Essentially, evaluation staff extract an initial statement of teaching and learning processes from program materials. Developers react to the statement and suggest revisions, until an outline of processes assumed critical to program success is mutually agreed upon. Field test objectives, site selection, and instrumentation, data analysis, and reporting are carried out within the framework of that working assumptions model.

Data Gathering Methods

This approach uses basically ethnographic methods for learning about human behavior in natural contexts, and for understanding events from the multiple perspectives of people involved in the program (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973; Wilson, 1977). Although the researcher enters the field with a set of dimensions derived from the Working Assumptions Model, methods such as semi-structured interviewing, classroom observation, and participant journals provide users opportunities to teach developers about their experiences with materials. Opportunities for participants to review and respond to the researchers' findings and interpretations can also increase the validity of the results.

Figure 2.

Evaluator Role	Developer Role
1. Define and clarify the function of a Working Assumptions Model as a field test framework.	
	2. Provide "artifacts" of develop-process, including funding proposals, course materials, conference presentations, goals statements, etc.
3. Develop preliminary model of processes and activities expected as faculty and students (and others) work with materials.	
	4. Assess validity of model as description of program teaching-learning processes.
5. Revise model	
	6. Assess validity of revised model.
	7. Set priorities/select processes viewed as most critical to eventual program success.
8. Design field test aimed at 1) gathering information about the extent to which assumed processes are taking place; and under what conditions; 2) identifying unanticipated processes which may also be critical to realization of program goals.	
	9. Provide reactions and suggestions.
10. Carry out data gathering, analysis, and reporting to developers on extent to which program works as assumed.	

Utilization of Results

Findings can have two general uses. First, they can guide revisions and further development of program content, goals and even of the developers' assumptions about how program materials bring about program goals. Second, they can generate issues and research questions needing exploration in subsequent implementation and "summative" stages of program development and testing. The discussion of a specific evaluation case in the next section of the paper focuses on these two general uses of early field test findings.

AN ILLUSTRATION: EARLY EVALUATION OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT: E PLURIBUS UNUM

The Materials

A Working Assumptions approach was used to field test early "prototype" units of a new social science program for community colleges. Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the program presents an interdisciplinary approach to issues of ethnic pluralism in America. Six to eight units use primary sources, historical essays, policy case studies and discussion activities to explore conflicts between ethnic diversity and common American ideals and values. The two units which were field tested focused on a case study of Native American land use, and on immigration cases and policy. Eventually, other cases will also focus on education, political access, and language. A set of "core" materials, which were also field tested in a preliminary form, present major themes and concepts which integrate the separate case study units.

Field Test Objectives

The purpose of the field test was to learn whether the materials stimulate teaching and learning processes implicit in project materials. More specifically, developers wished to learn how instructors adapted materials to their course goals within their discipline and in relation to their teaching philosophies, and how students integrated personal biases and opinions about pluralism issues with historical background and political and cultural concepts presented in the materials. Evaluation staff worked with course developers to outline a Working Assumptions Model of the program (Figure 3). The field test was designed to enable evaluators to learn whether the processes outlined in the model were indeed occurring in test site classrooms.

Test Site Selection

Several colleges, having heard about the project and having been recommended to Education Development Center, indicated a desire to participate in the American Experiment project. Five colleges were selected, three in the Northeast, one in Chicago and the fifth in the Greater Los Angeles area. Participating colleges were:

- Bunker Hill Community College, Boston, Massachusetts
  Loop College, City Colleges of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
- Mercer County Community College, Trenton, New Jersey
- Mount San Antonio College, Walnut, California
- North Shore Community College, Beverly, Massachusetts

In selecting field test sites and collaborating faculty, we were concerned with involving faculty who not only held strong interest in American history, ethnicity and public policy but also wanted to explore new approaches to teaching their discipline and subjects.

Figure 3

Working Assumptions Model for Early Materials of
THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT: *E PLURIBUS UNUM*

Faculty will:

1. Utilize the materials and objectives in a variety of American history and social science course contexts and in a variety of community college settings by adapting the materials to their own teaching goals and philosophies.

Students will:

2. Read and listen to varied forms of information about the development of public policy related to issues of American ethnic pluralism.

3. Become involved in case studies of policy conflict and decision-making as real and complex human dramas, and be motivated to explore the issues underlying these conflicts.

4. Infer and compare different positions and interest of people and groups involved in the policy-decision cases.

5. Be aware of and articulate their own opinions, biases, and ideas as they are evoked by the materials, and be motivated to expand and inform their positions with additional information and other viewpoints.

6. Use historical background, legal and policy processes, and cultural concepts to identify factors contributing to policy conflicts related to American ethnic pluralism and to understand the process by which policies develop and change.

7. Apply the approach described in the steps above to current situations in their communities and in the country, which involve policy decisions related to American ethnic pluralism.

8. Integrate work on one or more policy units with a broader consideration of what they share with other Americans and what constitutes a realistic and desirable direction for a multi-ethnic American society.

= Developers' Working Assumptions

And as a result:

History and social science offerings in community colleges across the country will be expanded and strengthened.

Students taking these courses will develop and increase their

- knowledge of how conflicts related to American identity and ethnic diversity arise, and of the process by which public policy develops around these conflicts,
- skills in analyzing cases of conflict and decision-making,
- perception of themselves as active participants in an historical and ongoing process of American identity formation and public policy development.

= General Course Goals

Field sites are described in Figure 4 by course discipline and focus, the number, age range and ethnicity of students, and the amount of calss time devoted to use of the prototype materials. Ethnicity descriptions are approximate and derive from students' self-descriptions on the questionnaires as well as from our field visits and conversations with faculty. In sites where students gave specific ethnic affiliations, there percentages are added. In two classes, some black students identified themselves as Afro-American rather than Black; these two categories have been combined as one percentage.

Data Gathering Methods

To maintain a balance between fidelity to an "ideal model" and openness to other perspectives and events, semi-structured instruments (teacher logs, teacher interviews, student questionnaires) were used, together with informal, open-ended methods (ongoing correspondence, telephone converstions, classroom observations, retrospective analysis of taped classroom discussion). Because of budgetary and time constaints, it was necessary that instructors' perceptions supplied the primary "lens" through which we viewed materials in use. Questionnaires and occasional student interviews enable us to sharpen our understanding of instructors' experiences and assessments.

Specific data-gathering methods are described below:

Teacher Log: Instructors were asked to supply specified areas of information using their own writing style and organization. Instructors' logs proved invaluable for supplying specific information about what exactly was used, how it was used, and what additional materials and approaches instructors integrated with the EDC materials. The logs also provided an overall view of each instructor's teaching decisions and goals and enabled us to place tapes of class discussions in the context of the instructor's overall goals for the materials.

Figure 4

Field Site Descriptions: THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

			STUDENTS:			CLASS TIME ON MATERIALS:		
	COURSE	FOCUS	NUMBER	AGE	ETHNICITY	LAND	IMMIGRATION	CORE
BUNKER HILL Charlestown, MA	Government	Structure of state and local governments	30 (2 day sections)	18-50 65% 18-30 35% 30-50	100% white (20% specified Irish-American, 16% Italian-American, 4% Jewish)	10 hours over 5 weeks		
NORTH SHORE Beverly, MA	U.S. History	U.S. history from 1877	10 (1 day section)	19-27 70% 19-25 30% 25-27	100% white (14% specified Irish-American, 14% Italian-American)	6 hours over 3 weeks	3 hours over 1 week	1 hour
LOOP COLLEGE Chicago, IL	Sociology/ Anthropology	Social anthropology approach to social problems	30 (1 day section)	19-50 70% 19-29 30% 30-50	80% black/Afro-American 10% white	5-6 hours over 3 weeks	5 hours over 3 weeks	2 hours over 2 weeks
MOUNT SAN ANTONIO Walnut, CA	U.S. History	Full U.S history survey, colonial to present	120 (2 day, 2 evening sections)	18-40 Day sections under 30	54% white 3.6% black 10.7% Mexican-American	3-6 hours over 2 weeks	6-7 hours over 4 weeks	2 hours over 2 weeks
MERCER COUNTY*								
West Windsor, NJ	U.S. History	U.S. history from 1865	16 (1 day section)	18-30 80% 18-24 20% 25-30	100% White**	3 hours over 1 week	3 hours over 1 week	
West Windsor, NJ	U.S. History	U.S. history from 1865	40 (1 day section)	18-30 80% 18-24 20% 25-30	90% black 5% white	1½ hours over 1 week	2 hours over 1 week	
West Windsor, NJ	U.S. History	U.S. history from 1865	55 (1 day, 1 evening section)	18-55 50% 18-24 Day section younger	90% White 5% black		1 hour over 3 classes	
Trenton, NJ	Sociology	Racial and ethnic minorities	20 (1 evening section)	25-40 20% 25-30 25% 30-35 55% 35-40	90% black/Afro-American 10% white	3-6 hours over 2 weeks	3 hours over 2 weeks	

*Mercer County Community College has two campuses, one in West Windsor, one in Trenton.

**Overall, Mercer student population is 24% black, 76% white.

Teacher Interviews: Teachers were interviewed during evaluators' field visits, for the purpose of clarifying their use of materials in the particular class sessions observed. A set of semi-structured interview questions was used. Information would have been strengthened had a final interview been conducted with each instructor. Logs partially filled this function but lacked the cross-site consistency which would have been ideal.

Student Questionnaire: To compile a general report of student response that would be consistent across collaborating sites, we developed a brief instrument to be administered when students had completed all work on EDC materials. Time pressures on faculty at the end of the school year combined with the lateness of our specific request to administer the instrument resulted in only a fair response sample. The 108 returned questionnaires represent most of the students who worked with materials during the late spring in Bunker Hill, North Shore, and Mt. San Antonio. The ten questionnaires from Loop College represent a little over a third of that class and therefore may not be fully representative. The ten Mercer questionnaires received represent somewhat over half of only one of four classes that used EDC materials in that college. These considerations and the possibility that some students may have had difficulty with questionnaire directions lead us to use the results cautiously and only in conjunction with supportive data.

Classroom Observation/Field Visits

Each collaborating site was visited at least twice. (The two Boston area sites were observed more frequently.) These visits established and maintained productive rapport between evaluation staff and pilot instructors which enabled us to

- see instructor's concerns regarding ongoing use of materials;
- gather a feeling for their individual approaches to working with the materials; and
- observe and tape record class discussions

Further, discussion with faculty and students before and after a taped class session proved critical for helping us interpret events. Finally, our periodic field visits encouraged instructor use of materials and contributed instructor/student interest in the field test.

Analyzing Data and Validating Findings

Information from the preceding sources was grouped for analysis three ways:

Across Sites: Sites were compared with regard, for example, to which parts of the units instructors used, how much time was spent on each unit, what strengths and problems instructors saw in materials, and how students responded to case study materials.

By Clustering: Instructors were grouped by course discipline and teaching philosophy to assess how these two factors may be related to use of materials and student response.

Within Site: All available information from a specific site was viewed as a whole to provide not only an integrated picture of how materials were used in a particular classroom but also to indicate how students' reactions developed over the period of use. For example, in two sites we saw students move from the study of a relatively unfamiliar group (Native Americans) to discussion of issues related to groups in their own community (Boston ethnic conflicts; Californian perceptions of illegal immigrants). This progression

revealed how initial student responses became consequently informed with information and perspectives from the units.

Additional Validation of Findings

A conference held six weeks after the completion of instructors' use of materials, provided pilot instructors and project scholars an opportunity to respond and clarify issues arising from preliminary analysis of the field test information, presented in a report prepared for the conference. Instructors were encouraged to provide information, and further interpretation regarding the tentative findings of the report. Project scholars raised further considerations and suggested ideas for strengthening development of the full set of materials in response to issues raised. Conference proceedings were then integrated into our analysis and are reflected in the Results section of this report.

Results

An "in-house" report of field test findings (EDD, 1979) discusses the strengths and problems of materials in relation to each of the eight working assumptions in Figure 3. Rather than reiterating those detailed results, this paper focuses on how some of those findings were utilized for further program development and assessment. To keep this paper of manageable length we have selected findings related to three working assumptions in the model (Nos. 3,5 and 8). Findings are summarized, followed by a brief discussion of their implications for further program development and eventual, larger scale national field testing of the program (projected for Fall, 1980). The latter is presented in terms of research questions which were generated by the early field test, and are appropriate to a more summative evaluation at a later stage.

Assumption #1: Faculty will utilize the materials and objectives in a variety of American history and social science course contexts and in a variety of community college settings by adapting the materials to their own teaching goals and philosophies.

Findings

A finding related to the underlined part of this general assumption about faculty was that some faculty had more difficulty than others in adapting the "participatory approach" of the materials to their own teaching goals and philosophies. American Experiment materials embody a learning approach which is "participatory" in two senses. First, the combination of case study and questions, together with instructions for students to write out their personal opinions at various stages in the presentation of a case, encourage students to carry on individual dialogue with the positions presented in the materials. Second, class exercises, suggested small group activities, and general discussion questions encourage students to interact with one another and with the instructor around issues. These modes of participation are designed to help students draw upon information and perspectives in the materials and in the class group in developing more informed positions.

Analysis of instructor logs, interviews, and classroom transcripts enabled us to tentatively identify three different philosophies which instructors brought to these "participatory" materials. As they are expressed through instructor statements regarding primary and overriding goals for their students, they are:

Academic Skills -- increasing students' analytic and conceptual tools and increasing their general knowledge of history and American society

Social Awareness -- increasing students' awareness of and tolerance for the particular needs of different minority groups, and understanding those needs in a historical context;

Personal Awareness -- empowering students to explore and understand their own personal history and attitudes within a larger historical context and to take an active and responsible role in creating a more equitable society.

To some extent all instructors shared these three concerns. All, for example, were concerned with increasing students' analytic and conceptual skills; however, the relative importance each gave to a particular orientation differed.

Our field trial data suggests that instructors with the Social Awareness and Personal Awareness orientations tended to create a more interactive, participatory classroom environment than the instructors whose orientation emphasized academic skills. Faculty with a more"academic skills" orientation felt the participatory elements contributed a "high schoolish" quality in the materials. These instructors referred to the study and discussion questions, the "your reactions" sections (which encourage students to write their opinions in the text) and the group exercises and role playing as "leading students by the hand" or as "a little condescending." They felt such exercises are "sort of walking them through, leading them through by the hand."

Differences of opinion about the "high schoolish" quality of the materials seemed to reflect contrasting views of the needs of community college students and faculty, and of how the materials can best respond to those needs. Instructors with the Social Awareness and Personal Awareness philosophies felt particularly strongly that students should be encouraged to exchange ideas with other students and that the participatory approach encouraged that exchange. They saw even mature, evening students as needing to practice and develop skills in analyzing and integrating diverse kinds of information, in formulating questions and in applying historical concepts

to current problems. More "academically" oriented instructors tended to feel that their students need more direct, less process-oriented presentations of issues, an approach similar to that to be found in a four-year institution. They argued that the approach of the American Experiment materials "won't have transfer validity."

Instructors' responses to the interactive character of the materials seemed to reflect not only their views of what community college students need, but also their own professionl needs. Concerned about giving their students courses comparable to those of four-year institutions, "academic skills" oriented faculty seemed concerned with maintaining their own college level status in institutions often regarded as "in-between" high school and college. An instructor who used the participatory approach in the materials but could nevertheless identify with the ambiguous status of community college faculty, articulated the problem this way:

> In community colleges we're very sensitive about being in-between. We <u>are</u>. We're in-between a four year college and high school and we're very concerned...that we are considered more like high school than we are like college....This is the reason why we look at the materials and we're always worried. You have to be aware in presenting the materials that you aren't talking down to us.

Concern for faculty status seemed to underlie suggestions that materials need not provide discussion questions. "From the teacher's point of view... "What do you think I am, a dope? That I can't come up with these questions?"

<u>Implications for Further Development and Evaluation</u>

Because a majority of participating faculty found the participatory approaches stimulating, and developers felt committed to this approach to the study of American ethnic pluralism, they decided to maintain the approach but in a careful way. For example, one of the units, which provoked the "high schoolish"

criticism more than the others, had more of a workbook, fill-in-the-blank format, which was a visual irritant to some of the more academically oriented faculty. Modification toward a less obvious workbook style was proposed. Some faculty proposed that reluctance to try group participatory exercises, particularly role-playing, might stem as much from a lack of experience with this format as from concern with faculty status:

> I was scared of it initially, just the mechanics of the damn thing, moving the chairs around inthe room and creating a zoo-like atmosphere, but...it worked out marvelously [role play of a community council meeting]. Now if that's high schoolish, it's high schoolish, but it worked and when we went on to Big Abe and the fisheries they were there with it because they had dealt with it hypothetically and then they made the transition to the real [case].

To encourage other new users to try them, developers decided to include descriptions of successful faculty use of some of the teaching strategies.

Findings related to this first working assumption generated the following research question for the larger scale field testing of materials: <u>Do materials help community college faculty meet their own status and achievement needs as well as the skills needs of their students</u>?

> Assumption #5: Students will be aware of and articulate their own opinions, biases and ideas as they are evoked by the materials, and be motivated to expand and and inform their positions with additional information and other viewpoints.

<u>The Findings</u>

Although developers designed case study materials to engage students; interest in pluralism conflicts, they did not anticipate the intensity with which some groups of students would respond to materials. Instructor reports and classroom discussion transcripts suggest that the intense and personal character of these responses made it difficult in fact to motivate students to "expand and inform their positions with additional information

and other viewpoints." The following two themes characterize a good deal of students' writing and discussion around the two units:

Powerlessness and Anxiety in Relation to Political and Social Processes

This theme manifested itself in several ways. In response to the case involving Indian fishing rights, a predominantly Irish Catholic group expressed feelings of being threatened by and in competition with other groups for scarce jobs and resources and at a disadvantage because of affirmative action policies. Their support for an Indian leader's position in the fisheries case changed to a sense of betrayal when they discovered he was actually making a good living from fishing; they began seeing him less as an "underdog" and more someone competing for a profitable living from fishing. During a discussion interview between one of our evaluation staff, the instructor and a student following a heated class discussion, the student explained his classmates' distress at the Indian case:

> It's a pretty good living. And I see what they [students] may resent is the fact that he now is taking advantage of us in order to make a good living...It's not just the cultural issues, not just the sentimental issues about the poor Indian...it's the kind of discrimination...that around here they'd face when you have affirmative action and somebody says you're not going to get hired for a job because "We've got to hire a black."

The instructors' log corroborated the students' interpretation: "These people feel so threatened economically and socially, they can't think rationally about the issue."

In response to a unit on American immigration policy, a largely black low-income group of students argued that new immigrants threaten their jobs and social services. In class discussions of immigration issues, these students frequently raised the questions: "Is it right to deprive our people here to take in these foreigners?" "Will this be a threat to black people who have not been given what they rightly deserve?" "Can we really afford it?"

"Why don't we let them stay where they are and help them to be self-supporting there?" (Class transcript and instructor log.) The instructor described the general tone as one of "collective dispair" about ever receiving their fair share of the system's resources.

Ethnic and Social Intolerance; Ethnic/Racial Stereotyping

Evidence of this second theme comes primarily from instructor reports of frequent stereotyping of ethnic groups. In the case of Native Americans, several instructors were surprised at the superficiality of students' romantic images of Indians and at "how little they know of the history and plight of the Native American in this country," or about reservation conditions or recent Indian political movements. One sociology instructor found that his black students initially viewed Indians as more like whites and did not identify them as an oppressed group.

Negative stereotyping occurred fairly often: "Mexicans have so many children and profit from California schools without giving anything to the state," "New immigrants don't ever know anything," and "Blacks don't have any culture." While the targets of slurs, when they occurred, were frequently against ethnic groups with whom the students were in relatively close contact (and with whom they were in some cases in competition), instructors suggested that some of the students' responses to refugee and immigrant dilemmas reflect a lack of contact with ethnic problems and the absence of a concept of culture or subculture. As one instructor put it, many students are "cushioned from an awareness of cultural differences at home and abroad," and therefore lack a sensitivity to the differences in language, customs, and values which characterize new immigrant and refugee groups, and which continue to characterize well-established subgroups in America.

The impact of materials is not clear. We would not expect student exposure to one or two units to substantially alter their political or ethnic views. Nevertheless, developers hoped that materials would increase students' knowledge of other viewpoints and of factors underlying them. Although several instructors felt that some students expressed more thoughtful and informed positions after working with the units, they pointed out that many students moved from an apparently but perhaps superficially pluralistic, pro-Indian position in the fisheries case to the essentially less pluralistic stance, that to grant Indians special rights is "reverse discrimination."

One instructor saw his students move from feeling the Mexican illegals "take jobs away from us and we have to get rid of them" to "Well, maybe they're not taking that many jobs from us and most jobs nobody else will do anyway... Who's going to go out with a wheelbarrow and pick lettuce?" Nevertheless, the instructor was bothered by the persisting expression that we must "get rid of the illegals," particularly because it came without any evidence or thoughful analysis of factors contributing to the illegals' problem.

Instructors suggested two factors which may decrease student motivation to consider alternative points of view. One is what faculty and many students identify as the "liberal bias" of the materials. Some instructors suggested that the Indian case study does not sufficiently treat the non-Indian sides of the case. The second is the proximity of a case study to students' personal community experience. Two instructors hypothesized that students will have the greatest difficulty expanding their initial bias in cases where they coincide with situations in student communities. While recognizing the great value of the immigration material for his students, the California instructor also, however, acknowledged the special challenge it posed for students to work on a case "close to home."

Implications for further development and evaluation

Developers felt these findings can contribute to the design of training materials for instructors and to the redefinition of some course objectives. Training materials should emphasize that case materials would offer different and unique teaching challenges depending on students' age, maturity, ethnic background and experience with pluralism issues. For students struggling to achieve viable income and job status, materials would be likely to tap feelings of economic and social powerlessness, which could make it difficult to consider the special claims of other groups.

For students whose own communities are in conflict with any of the ethnic groups discussed in the materials, cases may evoke stereotyping and negative comments. For these students, considering other perspectives and absorbing new information may be difficult, and they may need to focus initially on groups farther from their own current lives. Once concepts are understood through a less familiar case, their application to more emotionally loaded issues may be easier, but perhaps never free from high affect. Finally, for students without any particular ethnic identity or sense of cultural differences, interest or sympathy is sometimes more remote. For these students, developing a deeper understanding of American cultural differences and their relation to American culture in general may be prerequisite to exploring case study policy issues.

These findings also lead developers to consider a revision and sharpening of course goals. It was argued that "awareness" one's own attitudes and positions vis a vis pluralism issues, might be appropriate course outcomes, rather than interim learning processes. Participants at the scholars and instructors' conference felt "pluralistic" or "tolerant" attitudes should not be viewed as a project objective. Heightened awareness of

positions on issues, even though it might not lead to more tolerant attitudes was suggested as a more reasonable goal. In that vein, a project scholar argued:

> ...the general assumption [is] that increased awareness reduces intolerance. I think that's simply not a legitimate assumption... it very often will go in...the opposite direction, as students begin to perceive their own self-interests threatened by some things that they could be tolerant about at a distance.

He argued further that "if we're talking about long range change, change which will increase awareness, hopefully there's going to be an improvement" but on the short range basis of one college course, or a set of materials within one larger course, the objective of increasing tolerance is not realistic. Conference participants suggested several short range course objectives to developers, which they felt precede any movement toward more pluralistic, socially tolerant attitudes for students who espouse exclusionary or assimilationist positions. These included, for example,

- awareness of personal positions and of the details and arguments which support them;
- awareness of the difference between attitudes and truths, and that the former are not static, but change with additional information or a change of circumstances;
- awareness that there are distinctly different points of view about the same situation;
- awareness of the historical, cultural and economic background of their own positions; etc.

Participants felt that these kinds of awareness are appropriate as initial targets for the materials, must precede fuller understanding of pluralism. Findings related to this fifth working assumption generated these research questions:

> <u>Do materials work as effectively for students with minimal ethnic and multi-cultural experience as with students with strong ethnic identities and minority group concerns</u>?

To what extent do materials increase students' awareness of their own attitudes and positions in relation to pluralism issues and their awareness of the basis for their and others' positions?

Assumption #8: Students will integrate work on one or more policy units with a broader consideration of what they share with other Americans and what constitutes their ideas for a multi-ethnic American society.

Findings

Data analysis relating to this assumption produced the finding that many students and instructors could not accept the optimistic view of the "new pluralism" in America, which is embodied in the core materials. The basic perspective of those materials is that the American society as a whole has in fact become more tolerant of diversity, in cultural, language and political areas. Minority group students and instructors, particularly felt this perspective glossed over the continuing inequities and oppression of minority values in the society.

In at least three of the participating eight classes, students as well as instructors strongly question the realism of the core essay perspective. In one class, instructor and students used the essay as a "foil" to the instructors' course theme of social inequality and the dominance of majority (Anglo-American) values in the society. The transcript of another class shows students arguing against the essay's hopeful themes. When that instructor echoed the essay's statement that "Americans have a set of shared institutions as well as shared political values" a study responded that "You're putting (writing) all those words down, fairness, equality. There are certain cities and certain states where certain ethnic minorities do not get opportunities, do not get any of these words, equality." In

response to the phrase "certain factors in the American ideology that we all share" the following dialogue developed:

> Student 1: What do we share?
>
> Student 2: Freedom.
>
> Student 1: Belief in freedom?
>
> Student 2: Even that is not true. I mean the book, I read the whole book and to me it's all rhetoric...I mean you know the people who put the book out knew what they're talking about, but in real life it's not like this at all. Some people will look you in the face and say "I don't have any freedom in this country. There's no freedom for me." Now they may be Black, or Indian or Spanish...This dream of freedom, where'd it go?

Students in this class made a distinction between basic, general American ideals such as equality and freedom, and current American values such as materialism and acceptance by the dominant political and social powers ("To be accepted by our society in general" "More or less to be accepted by who's in control at the time" "Like to have the boss be proud and say that's a good job you did." "To get along with the status quo more or less" "Conforming to the people whoare in control"). Beyond a set of abstract shared ideals, these students implied, is the reality that a majority group is in power and people need to conform to their values if they are to get their share of society's goods.

In the class transcript examined, we heard very little specific discussion of what a "pluralistic" or "decent multi-cultural society" actually is. Discussions tend to reiterate assimilationist and separatist positions, or to discuss pluralism only within general, abstract phrases like "recognition of diversity" and "shared bonds that cut across differences," which did not seem to have any specific meaning for students.

It was not clear what students actually viewed as a pluralistic society as they discuss the core essay. Was their ideal of a pluralistic society one in which minority values are tolerated or one in which minority values might become an integral part of American mainstream values? Instructors and students may not have been able to discuss their conceptions of pluralism because of time constraints; on the other hand, it may be that the materials do not provide sufficient specific images, or a full enough set of concepts about ethnic pluralism to encourage such debate.

The question of how pluralistic the American society actually is became a central, intensely debated issue in the follow up conference. The emerging concern of the group seemed to be how to present a view of American pluralism which takes cognizance of past and continuing inequities while also providing a credible basis for hope about America's future and motivation to participate in social change.

Implications for further development and evaluation

These findings lead to a number of revision suggestions. First, to present a more realistic view of ethnicity, materials could expand the public policy approach to include economic and institutional perspectives on ethnicity. It was argued, that the emphasis on public policy development, while extremely valuable in the case presentations, tends to give an extra loading to the optimistic bias since "it has in fact been in the political system which is most accessible." The addition of a core piece with three historical cases of "management of diversity" was suggested as a further way to broaden the picture of American pluralism. It was argued that students would be in a stronger and more informed position to address value issues of "what should be" if they were given materials about what was and is.

In addition, participants suggested that new case study units could integrate public policy with economic perspectives by juxtaposing legislative change with actual social change. The projected education unit could, for example, show "great changes in public policy brought remarkably modest changes in the actual structure of educational achievement."

Findings related to this eighth working assumption generated the following general research question:

> To what extent is the view of "new American pluralism" in the materials credible to students and instructors in terms of their own personal histories? How effectively do materials help students integrate their own experience with new information and concepts about pluralism in the American past and present?

Conclusion

The above findings are selected to illustrate how early field testing, which focuses on the working assumptions of early materials, can produce directions for further program development and assessment. The kinds of revisions discussed include changes in written materials, in program goals and objectives, and in developers' assumptions about how the program achieves its goals. The latter is particularly illustrated by findings concerning attitudes toward ethnicity which are provoked by students' reading and discussion of materials. It may be that "non-pluralistic" attitudes may be sharpened in the short range, as students become aware of and able to articulate strong biases. We may need to revise our assumption that students will be motivated to inform and change deeply rooted feelings, particularly anxieties and beliefs about their own economic futures. Modest goals of

increasing students' awareness of other points of view than their own may need to replace more ambitious goals of increasing tolerance and promoting students' more "objective" analysis of pluralism case studies.

In addition to illuminating developers' strategies, goals and working assumptions, early field testing can reveal issues needing further, more focused study in a full field test of the program. We increase the validity of implementation and summative evaluation design as we learn about critical concerns of program users in early field trials.

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